

# Global Education Policy Directives: Impact on Teachers from the North and South

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*Education policies from international organisations such as the World Bank and OECD are restructuring education to promote a utilitarian vision of education. By examining the experiences and opinions of teachers from countries representing north-south global regions, it is possible to identify the social and political implications of education reform as it impacts on teachers as not only practitioners, but also as social and political agents. As global communities are more inexorably linked through global, macro policies, an outcome of this trend is a growing political and social divide between the global north and south. The paper aims to identify and discuss the significant concerns of teachers from the global north and south in relation to education reform.*

Globalisation, neo-liberalism, global north and south, education reform, teachers, World Bank

## THE CONTEXT OF REFORMS

From the early, tumultuous beginnings of the teaching profession, Lawn (1996) delineates the period 1920s to 1990, as the period which saw the rise of the so-called 'modern' teacher. The modern teacher is one whose agency extends beyond the classroom into the heart of social and political change. Modern teachers' agency was constructed in response to the emergence of mass, public education. Extending education to all classes was on the one hand a huge step forward for building social equality through educational opportunity however, adjunct to this development were issues about the relationship between education, class and social equity. It is during the modern era, that teachers' struggle for recognition of their expertise in educational matters and struggling for greater self-determination of their profession came to the fore. The issues for teachers concerned the impact of public education and whether the outcomes did in fact enable greater social justice and equality through access and social mobility or whether education was used as a means to reproduce the social and economic order.

Issues of power and interests stir the type of political questions that, according to Lawn (1996) are central in the establishment of a new social group. These factors influence how this group fits into an emerging structure. The political questions that engaged teachers, as a new social group, were based on the teachers' view that their role did have the capacity to influence the direction of change so that teachers should have a stronger voice in the political economy. Teachers sought to politicise their work practices and construct education as a site challenging the regulatory control of education by the State.

By the 1990s, emergent social phenomena challenging the structural parameters of social and educational change had a distinct and global character. The reconceptualising of teachers from the mid 1990s onwards educational change started to focus on issues and conflicts that arise from the altered context generically called 'globalisation'. Educational policy and change responded to the emerging global market ideology underpinned by human capital rationalisation restructuring education priorities (Spring 1998). The emergence of globalisation as a social, financial and

economic force presented a transitional historical marker for teachers. In a similar way to Lawn, Mason (1998), states that globalisation ushered in a new era for teachers, one that is divorced from previous ties with the nation and national control of the profession. Mason states, "The end comes when the discourse, the forms of control, its drive and confidence are eroded" (Mason 1998, p.10). By discourse, Mason is referring to the way education is constructed. The current context couches education in the language of the market underpinned by human capital measures and education as a 'weightless' product. In this context, new ways to fit education and teachers into the wider social landscape are sought.

This social change has implications for teachers as agents of the education system. In the era of globalisation, the teachers are experiencing the dissonance that comes from global educational policies and the globalised template for education change that requires a new form of teacher professional. Teachers are aware of these new demands and their reactions have a distinct global dimension. Teachers' reflections on educational change and their agential reconstruction show that there are differences between the global north and south in how teacher want to reconstruct their practice and agency. The paper aims to identify significant concerns that teachers from the global north and south have about education reform in their local spaces.

The global south refers to lesser-developed countries characterised by:

Per capita GNP of less than U.S. \$9,656 (EMTA); Recent or relatively recent economic liberalization (EMTA 2000 privatization of previously state-owned companies, and/or removal of foreign exchange controls and obstacles to foreign investment); Non-membership in the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (Emerging Markets Traders Association <http://www.emta.org/>)

In conclusion, the paper then discusses the social and cultural differences between teachers from the north and south and finally makes suggestions about implication for the teaching profession in the future.

## METHOD

In July 2001, Education International held its third World Congress in Thailand (<http://www.ei-ie.org/congress2001/index.htm>). The paper draws on evidence of teachers' union delegates from 29 countries and regions who attended the Education International Third World Congress. The Congress attracted participation from over 55 national teachers' unions from across the world in order to address the key issues relevant to education and teachers about educating in a global economy, which was the theme of the congress. Teachers' views, presented by their national delegates, engaged the assembly on a range of issues related to their work, practice and agency capacity in relation to the global economy. These presentations were recorded as national delegates spoke in sessions at the congress.

The next stage of the research involved collating the opinions and views of teachers and analysing significant themes running through their views. This process used computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, Atlas/ti. This program facilitates the grouping of qualitative data through a coding mechanism where codes are used to construct nominal categories to construct themes that run through teachers' views. From the views presented by teachers representing 29 different regions and countries, 13 themes were recurrent in teachers' concerns about social and education change and the development of the profession. The results of this research are presented in the following tables.

## TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Table 1 shows the main concerns for teachers at the Education International Third World Congress, classified into 13 broad themes. The themes that feature highly in teacher concerns include neo-liberalism, social conditions, teacher conditions, gender issues and the role of Education International. From the 13 concerns, only four could be classified as teacher-only concerns, that is, issues that affect teachers and their teaching practice at the school level only. For the most part, teachers' concerns are couched in the social contextualising of teachers' practice and agency.

**Table 1. Education International Third World Congress: Educating in a global economy**

	Code of ethics	Curriculum Content	Education International	Gender	Globalisation	Health	Neoliberalism	Social Conditions	Teacher Conditions	Teacher Role	Teacher Status	Union/Rights	World Bank	Total
African Region	1		1				2	1				1		6
Asian region	1	1	3				1	2	2					10
Australia							6	1	1	1				9
Botswana					2					1		1		4
Canada	1	6						3				1	1	11
Caribbean	1		2		1				2	1				7
Chile	3		1	2	1	7	1	4	9	1	4			33
Congo										1		1		2
Ecuador				1	1			1	1		1			5
El Salvador					4			1	2			2	3	12
Europe		1	2						2					5
Fiji			2		1	2		1			1			7
France	1	1					3	1	4	1				11
Gambia		1								1		1		3
Germany								1	1	1				3
Kenya	1						3	4		1		1		10
Korea							2	1	1					4
Latin America		2	2				1			1			1	7
Morocco			2				1	1					1	5
Nepal		1					6	6	1					14
Norway	2													2
Philippines	1			7	1	1			1			1	3	15
Poland	1	1					3	1			1		1	8
Senegal							2		2			1		5
South Africa		1	1				2					1		5
Spain	1		4		1		2	1	1		1	1		12
Switzerland	1		1											2
United States			1		1		2	1				1	5	11
Zambia						3	1	1			2			7

A number of themes are interrelated such as social conditions and neo-liberalism. The heavy criticism of neo-liberal policy, shown through 47 references to neo-liberalism from 233, shows it as a salient factor of concern for teachers. The social and economic reform process of neo-liberalism is based on global economic competition between nations and regions, the downsizing of the public sector to enhance its competitive capacity, privatisation of public institutions, and the marginalisation of the working classes and lower social economic classes (George 1999). George states, "At the international level, neo-liberals have concentrated all their efforts on three fundamental points: free trade in goods and services, free circulation of capital and freedom of investment"(<http://www.tni.org/george/>). Teachers expressed disagreement with neo-liberal policies in similar arguments as George linking the neo-liberal social and economic reform to the

privatisation of education and the exclusion of poorer children and learners, especially girls, the restructuring of learning for global economic utility, the marginalisation of teachers as social agents, and the degradation of working conditions for many teachers around the world. In this case, there was clear overlap between neo-liberalism and deteriorating working conditions for teachers.

Neo-liberalism and views about social conditions also overlapped with concerns about gender issues. Gender was discussed on two levels. First, in terms of girls' education, teachers were concerned that girls were still less likely to attend school especially in countries where poverty and cultural differences preclude girls from education. It was argued that the worsening social conditions resulting from neo-liberal reform had serious impact on girls' education because in such a context, educating girls was an added family and social expense. Second, gender was discussed in terms of the feminisation of the teaching force and the negative impact this had on pay and conditions as well as the lack of female representation at the upper levels of education management and leadership in policy and institutions.

In contrast, globalisation, as distinct from neo-liberalism was used to refer to a form of social progress and modernisation that nevertheless needed to be humanised. Teachers, for the most part distinguished between the politics of neo-liberal change from the processes of globalisation. Therefore, concerns about deteriorating social conditions correlated with the impact of neo-liberal reform and the negative social and education consequences in lesser-developed countries such as Kenya and Nepal and South American nations. Fifteen criticisms named the World Bank as a direct cause of neo-liberal policy. The most strident criticism came from the United States and El Salvador. For example, the United States criticised the polarisation of rich and poor, the suppression of human right and union rights, the commercialisation of education and the ongoing debts for third world countries.

These concerns were implicit in arguments against neo-liberal reform and the policy actions of the World Bank.

In more specific concerns about teachers and their work, the most prevalent problem concerned the working poor conditions of teachers around the world. This situation was evident in less developed countries for example, a wage six-year wage freeze in El Salvador and teachers being jailed in Colombia for opposing social policy. The teachers' representatives from France summed up many concerns for more developed countries of the need for teachers to be more engaged with curriculum matters, to construct a political curriculum that educated future workers.

In order to redress deteriorating conditions there was a need to reclaim educational authority as part of teachers' practice and in doing so to stress the social responsibilities of teachers. In other words, the aim was to increase teachers' power in the reform process and thereby reclaim status in education. For teachers to be more socially active and construct a social and political agency, especially in the current context, meant extending teachers' agency beyond delivering education.

Teachers presented a united front in wanting to have greater representation in the reform process. They argued in favour of keeping education as a public good for all. However, when strategising the details of enhancing their capacity to influence reform, distinct differences appeared in the way that teachers sought to infiltrate the reform processes that were increasingly constructed at the macro level.

### **EMERGING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH**

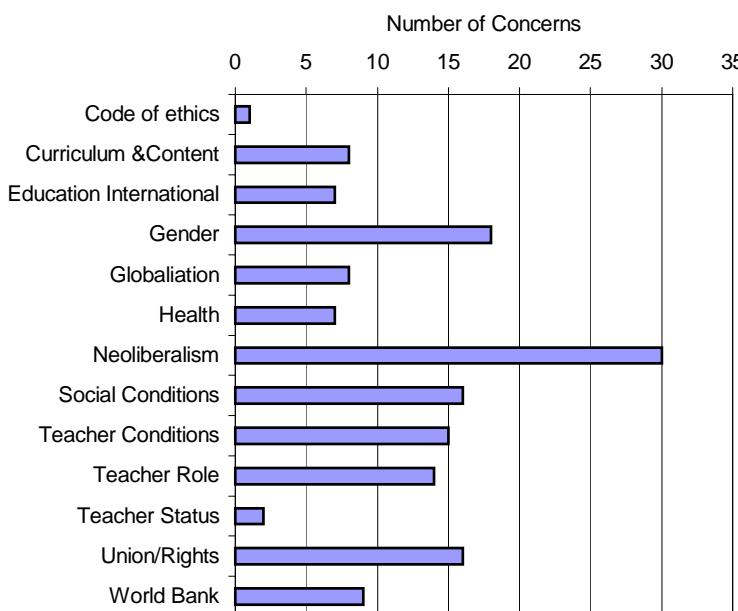
When considering the concerns of teachers as presented at the Education International Congress, there were clear differences between the types of problems faced by teachers from lesser-

developed countries to those from more affluent countries. Figures 1 and 2 present the different emphases.

When the concerns expressed by teachers at the world congress were examined, taking into account the social economic context in which teachers were situated, differences emerged in relation to their social and economic context that constructed teachers' practice. For 18 countries<sup>1</sup> that fall into the middle income or lesser developing nations (LDCs) definition, the overriding concerns were neo-liberalism, gender and social issues.

In most of these cases, the ideology of neo-liberalism was held responsible for creating social division, reducing education to a privatised, market good and marginalising teachers from being socially active agents. Teachers from Chile extrapolated a litany of social deprivation and exclusion resulting from neo-liberalism that has buried countries in a cycle of underdevelopment. Chilean teachers' representatives stated,

*Chile has been world pioneer of neo-liberal policies that have had great social impact. In the 1980s under Pinochet regime, the constitution was changed to alter labour code, health and social security laws and the opening of the market included education. As a result, the role of the teaching staff changed completely. Due to neo liberal tendencies and radical policies the constitutional rights were over ruled to suit neo liberal agenda of change. Chile calls for an alternative to the forces of globalisation that includes living with dignity. The harm of neo-liberal policies must be highlighted and the challenge is to remain united in the wake of such policies.*  
(Chilean Delegates at the Third World Congress)



**Figure 1. Concerns expressed by teachers from lesser-developed countries**

For lesser-developed nations such as Chile, the prevalence of neo-liberal reform has been part of the modern history of development. These reform measures have altered the social fabric of society and upon this foundation education has emerged as another means by which the neo-liberal reform further penetrates institutional reform. The link between education and social

<sup>1</sup> African region, Asian Region, Botswana, Caribbean, Chile, Congo, Ecuador, Fiji, Gambia, Kenya, Latin America, Morocco, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia

reform was foremost in Chilean teachers' concerns about the role of teachers in this dynamic. Showing awareness of the cultural reproductive role of teachers that might lead to the endorsement of neo-liberal policies through their practice and agency, Chilean teachers stressed, "*In the education sector, teachers need to rethink the role they are to play. Professional teaching staff must be a human resource to combat for the rights of people*". The significant role for teachers in this situation is to unite with the people against neo-liberal reform. Neo-liberal reform creates an education system that is uneven and promotes imbalance in society.

At a regional forum for African nations, African teachers concurred that neo-liberal social change had brought negative changes such as the increase in child labour. They called for child labour to be 'outlawed'. Fijian teachers pointed out that the lack of resources resulted in students not being able to perform and called on the government to deal with the social disparity. Another outspoken critic of neo-liberal reform came from the teachers in Nepal. They were concerned with "*the rate of privatisation and commercialisation of education, which is bought and sold on the streets of Nepal*". This was in the context of an increasing divide between rich and poor and the increasing lack of opportunity for excluded groups. The teachers reported that neo-liberal reform was pursued in the context where 66 per cent lived below the poverty line and 30 per cent had no schooling and lacked basics such as food, clothes and housing. The source of dissonance with neo-liberal reform targeted the World Bank's lending policies that created social division and maintained an unhealthy system. In terms of World Bank lending, the Nepalese teachers' representatives reported that, "*ten per cent of monies goes to target group and 90 per cent goes to rulers' pockets*".

A common factor that linked anti neo-liberalism of teachers from less affluent nations was their relationship to international organisations such as the World Bank and IMF. Underlying much of the criticism directed at neo-liberal reform were the lending practices of the World Bank, especially in the education sector. For example, in El Salvador, World Bank financial restructuring had established a system that further excluded children. Teachers reported that after the implementation of World Bank reform there had been an increase in non-enrolment of children due to unexpected hardships. For example, in 2000 there were half a million children not enrolled in school. After a devastating earthquake, this number increased to three-quarters of a million children. The fragile economic status of those struggling to stay above the poverty line were not cushioned by a social safety net of welfare and provision that maintained a standard of living despite unforeseen hardship. The most vulnerable group were poor children who forgave their educational rights due to economic hardships.

Another concern for teachers in lesser-developed nations related to gender issues. Teachers from the Philippines were especially vocal with respect to gender issues. To stress that the social status of women needed to be improved, they called for "*gender sensitive education; strengthening of women's committees and participation in all levels of decision making and planning*". However, there concerns were not limited to the classroom and institutional level, they also called for greater action against the feminisation of the workforce because "*that gender equates to lower income and status*" for the whole profession. They stated, "*The overriding negative is the stereotyping of the profession as a nurturing or caring profession which leads to lower salary and lower income*".

As a way forward, teachers from lesser-developed nations aligned their agential capacity with a call for greater social activism. There was a recognition that educational change and changes to working conditions were linked to broader social and economic change that would undermine the neo-liberal reform measures taken by governments under pressure to restructure social and economic institutions in order to take part in the global economy and qualify for loans from

international organisations. As Moroccan teachers stressed, “*Economies are handicapped because of IMF and World Bank policies*”.

Teachers in LDCs demanded a form of agency that encompassed social capacity in addition to institutional and classroom capacity. Chilean teachers’ definition of a well-rounded teachers included, “*Professional expertise in political, cultural, social and ethical dimensions*”. Social capacity referred to teachers’ having a greater input into social policy in order to address issues of exclusion and marginalisation of sectors of society. Underlying these demands was the issue of control and power over the profession and in education. With the tumultuous changes happening in developing countries, as educated professionals, teachers are often excluded from change. Teachers from Botswana added, “*Democracy in the regions is needed through the empowerment of regional bases to implement policies at the regional level, for example, EFA*”.

Teachers’ voices strategically left out of policy making formed a silent gap in policy that reconstructed social and educational reform. In such cases, change occurred in the society and in the schools without the necessary dialogue between agents who were constructing change and implementing the processes. Teachers in developing countries experienced the top down causal change without any real opportunity to have input. This process was a detriment to the profession and to the education system, which proceeds as a reproductive tool for other neo-liberal institutional reforms. However, teachers in lesser-developed nations wanted to redress this tendency, and reconstruct new agential boundaries that reclaimed their sphere of influence. Chilean teachers reminded others about this potential capacity to reclaim agency. They stated,

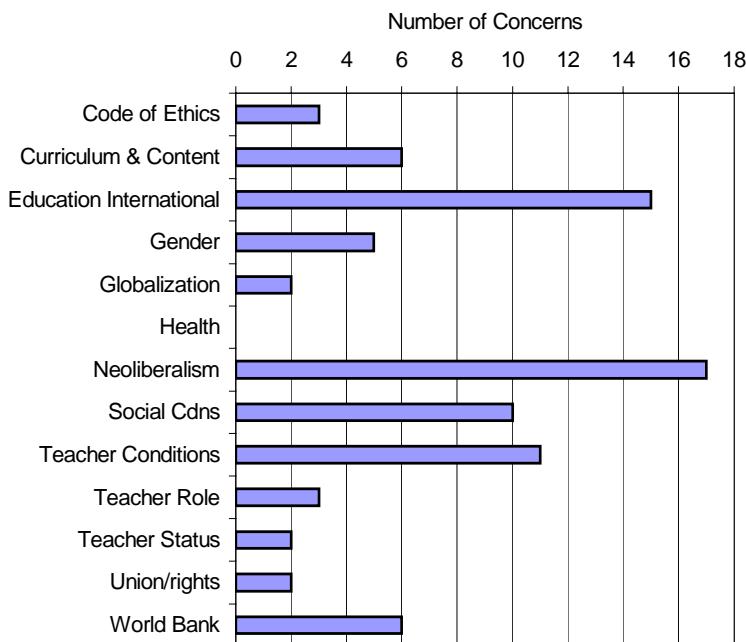
*Teachers are forces that bring about change. We know about teaching and how to bring about change with our expertise. We must be creative and autonomous as educators; Schools not be thought of as places where change is introduced and measured but as places of awareness.*

Exclusion from making real differences to structural changes reorganising social and education institutions left teachers in lesser-developed nations with a sense of being dictated to by global organisations with power and dollars to implement change. These organisations also worked in close partnership with governments to deliver outcomes and thus within these partnerships, teachers are the silent voice. There was a sense that ownership of education, once the cultural domain of nations, was in the hands to global agencies such as the World Bank who maintained governance over educational reform and left the management of that reform to national bureaucracies. The role of the World Bank in regional and national education systems received heavy criticism from teachers in both more and less developed nations, the sum of which could be shown through the comment from a Nepalese teachers who stated, “*Funding by INGOs and International Organisations (IO) make the rulers richer and the people poorer*”. Therefore, the issue for teachers was one of ownership of education and of their practice. Teachers from Gambia reminded others that, “*We teachers own education*” and in effect this was a call for the profession to reclaim education on behalf of cultural heritage grounds and on political grounds so that education was not a tool for the global agencies and their development agenda, but education was a public good and a human right.

## **TEACHERS FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH**

When comparing the concerns of teachers from more affluent nations, the significant common ground shared with their south colleagues is the opposition to neo-liberalism, as presented in Figure 2. Australian, Spanish, Polish and teachers from United States also criticised the dismantling of the welfare state and competition as a model for society that had exasperated intra-national and international social and economic differences. For example, the United States delegates at the Education International Congress criticised policies that impinged on workers’

rights and democratisation while stressing the need for greater compliance to international standards, enforceable labour rules and greater technical and legal support to developing nations. The United States implicated organisations such as IMF and the World Bank as international agencies, whose policies contravened their demands for equitable working conditions. There was much solidarity between north and south in their opposition to neo-liberal reform.



**Figure 2. Concerns expressed by teachers from more developed countries**

A subsequent issue for global north teachers dealt with the role of unionism and especially Education International as a global union representative for teachers. The way forward according to northern teachers was by enhancing the governance capacity of Education International as a macro structure able to represent teachers at the macro level of policy construction. This was not to say that global south teachers did not have an interest in Education International and union activity. Indeed 16 references were made to union concerns and seven to the role of education international in the concerns of LDCs. What was of interest is the predominance of references to Education International from teachers in the global north and more specifically teachers wanting to have greater input into how this body functioned at the macro structural level. For teachers from the north representation at the global level was a significant aspect for their profession to consider as it moves into the twenty-first century.

Canadian representatives were especially outspoken in terms of the role that Education International needed to play in the international arena. They stated,

*To optimize its policies E.I. must be a catalyst in the field and must be connected with international movements and have a higher regional presence. There must be more coherence of E.I. work to regional work and it must be present. E.I. must ground itself in regions.*

The Canadian recommendations disclosed a key point of difference between global north and south underlying issues of power, representation and global identity. Canadian teachers queried the logical position of Education International in forming partnership with the World Bank, especially in the context of World Bank history and poor track record in many developing

countries. They asked, “*How can Education International reconcile and be consistent in its approach of dealing with the World Bank and still maintain a credible position?*”

This query highlighted a distinct political and strategic divide between north and south teacher politics. Teachers from LDCs demanded more social and political action against imposed neo-liberal social policies while those from countries that were more affluent sought assimilationist means to humanise global policy in educational systems. The local experiences of globalisation were important to consider in the distinct responses. To struggle against the totalising forces of neo-liberal policy, the Latin American response to ‘globalisation’, for example, began from an ideological premise that the current form of globalisation meant neo-liberalism. The arguments exposed the contradictions of neo-liberal policy that hinged on classical economic theory upholding trade liberalisation and privatised competition between public goods and services as the natural way to serve public interests. The social and economic outcomes of such social policy had opened up social cleavages within nations where those able to pay for education were able to take advantage of the further opportunity that education brought. The praxis of globalisation is delivered through structural adjustment policies from the World Bank that model neo-liberal reform and underpinned much of the calls of defiance from LDCs.

However, for MDCs, globalisation or more specifically growing the knowledge economy offered competitive advantage for nations in the global market place. Education and the quality of its provision was a means to secure an advantage in the global market (Duan 1999; Green 1999; Hargreaves 2000; Hegarty 2000). The policy arguments put forward for the sectorial advantage of more developed nations ran through the policy of the OECD. For example, concerned that the future might favour the trade advantage to LDCs, the OECD (OECD 1997, 2001) underpinned policy with a so-called ‘winner-loser’ dynamic. Teachers in MDCs were torn between reproducing a system that was part of the broader global capital competitive model or letting their students down by not giving them the competitive edge. On the one hand, the global competition model took advantage of those countries, regions and economies that were still emerging, creating what Wallerstein (1990), Clayton (1998) and others have called ‘peripheral economies’ while maintaining the power in the core economies. Teachers within these peripheral economies experienced the effects of neo-liberalism and the competitive model first hand, blaming this model for social and education change as a source of greater exclusion and marginalisation of rich and poor in lesser-developed nations. The issue for teachers experiencing globalisation differently was how to unite teachers as professional class in the interests of social and education justice globally?

### **REDEFINING RELATIONS, BUILDING ALLIANCES AND DEGREES OF SEPARATION**

Negotiating change and redefining agential boundaries was a continuous process for teacher educators. In the current context though, this negotiation could not take place unilaterally nor be confined to national interests because of the interrelatedness of local restructuring with global changes. The emerging governance of macro structures in the form of global agencies had broadened the reach of change in systems so that social and education change from such macro structures was “multilevel and downwardly causal social reality” (Kontopoulos, 1995, p.1618). These structures were too influential to ignore, therefore the issue for teachers was how to engage with these structures and agents to meet the demands of teachers as a global professional class and in the interests of public education as a fundamental human right?

In terms of dealing with the World Bank, a proposition was put forward by Latin American countries that called for a redefining of relations with the World Bank as a way to unlock the ‘logical position’ question. Realising that the World Bank was a key global agent wielding power, the Latin American countries called for relations based on agreements rather than partnership,

using teacher numbers as a power leverage in the negotiations. The formation of partnerships between organisations was a growing phenomena in the global era. These alliances could take many forms, but crucial to the development of partnerships were key assumptions about the stakeholders and their relations.

Partnerships were essentially stakeholders acting as a team and making collaborative decisions directed towards objectives that were held to be important by the members of the partnerships (Seddon, Billet, and Vongalis, 2002). Underlying these relations was recognition of the important role that each stakeholder represented and the equality in decision outcomes. The premise of equality of representation and in the execution of decisions however, was not built into partnership negotiations with the World Bank. It still maintained much of the policy steering power by the fact that it held the money and funding guidelines. The World Bank definition of policy guides how monies were allocated and the process that would be put into place to disburse monies (WorldBank 2001). Latin American teachers surmised that the solution to form partnership with the World Bank in order to take part in education reform discussions was a compromise of teachers and their values. The willingness to form agreements, as a possible solution, kept political distance from the World Bank but still allowed a working relationship to develop as a way to move forward. Partnership implied greater reconciliation and common capacity building while agreements pointed to a more substantial degree of separation until the politics of the organisation was more in tune with real democratic decision making and determination. According to Chilean teachers, partnerships were reserved for "*Teachers and trade unions to work together to promote an ideological framework in school and society as well. Teachers must play a political role in society*".

However, the proposal for agreements rather than partnership was overturned by the congress vote, and preference was given to working in partnership with the World Bank.

This left a split in north-south political strategy of how to move forward in solidarity. The conciliatory reformist north strategy sought to work with global organisations, and be part of the process of change. In dealing with these organisations and having input into macro policy, the intention was to 'humanise globalisation' and bring about a growing awareness into the social and economic policy discussions held by global organisation.

The intention to 'humanise globalisation' raises a series of political issues for teachers and the creation of bipartisan strategy to reclaim stronger presence in influencing social and education change. First, the ambiguity of the idea of 'globalisation' has to be addressed in clear policy intentions because globalisation manifests as neo-liberalism in many countries. For example, teachers from El Salvador stated, "*Globalisation is having a greater effect on under developed countries. It is a system of change that excludes children and has caused many teachers to lose hope*". Could a system like this be humanised through partnerships? In order to claim a greater control and influence in education, teachers needed to clarify their stance in relation to the escalation of global capitalism and the role that education played in reproducing social and cultural values associated with this form of development. Fairclough has raised these key concerns,

Is 'exclusion' simply a condition which the poorest countries are in, or a process which they are subject to? There is often ambiguity in dominant globalisation narratives.  
(Fairclough, 2000)

Teachers from Morocco for example, argued that poverty needed to be fought in a structural way. It was not that teachers were against development and modernisation but the issue was negotiating education reform so it upheld human rights, equity and inclusion of all. Less developed nations were more vulnerable to poverty and deprivation resulting from the global policies of international agencies interested in profits and advantage.

What was evident from the teachers' responses at the World Congress was the clear ideological divide between north and south in response to globalisation and the ideological position and penetration of this positioning into policy and action. Responses from Latin American countries were consistent with an ideological framework based on theorists such as Bourdieu (1991) and Gramsci (1992). This underpinned a consistency in their arguments and policy stances. There was large-scale criticism of World Bank policy positions as well as the ideas of marketisation of knowledge and education as future directions of reform based on class alliances and consensus. There was a need for reform but in ways that built human rights with progress and modernisation that was inclusive of all. In contrast, Northern frameworks for change pursue the development of knowledge capitalism at the global and local level that had unintentional consequences of propping up processes of reform that had causal consequences of exclusion and marginalisation in some lesser-developed nations. The actions of the north were felt in the local lives of the people and teachers in the south.

This ideological division was especially problematic in articulating the interests of teachers as a global force and organising action in accordance with a consistent logic. The attack on neo-liberalism was a case in point. Latin American countries made the distinction between neo-liberal policies as opposed to globalisation. However, when analysing Education International responses to globalisation, statements that alluded to globalisation being both positive and negative failed to articulate a political stance of what was actually negative about globalisation. For example, the knowledge economy prioritised the use of IT to enhance educational utility and relevance. However, this policy priority aligning education provision with the demands of global knowledge economy was at the heart of the redefinition of education as a marketable good and service. When profits could be made from buying and selling education as a relevant and necessary tool of the global economy, the pressure was on governments to pursue this source of income or indeed to lessen the burden of provision of education through some form of user pay education. While there were fiscal arguments that made such policy seem cogent for the times, these took precedence over humanistic arguments that defined education as a right and thus a public spending that was a priority for governments and one that was exempt from marketisation. Governments had clear responsibilities to deliver rights to the public.

While teachers protested against the marketisation of education (AFP, 2001), the analysis of this practice showed a difference in how teachers from the north and south read the role of education in the global economy. The arguments presented by teachers from South America, Nepal, Kenya, Philippines, for example, drew on the notion that globalisation was a political process, underpinned by ideological premises, such as the notion that competition between nations was the norm in constructing global economic relations. South teachers questioned the need for teachers to buy into the ideology that marketisation of education was consistent with modernisation.

The politics of globalisation presented a dilemma for teachers and one that obstructed a bipartisan movement to move forward. According to Bourdieu's (1982; 1999) theory of practice, the ability to articulate a cohesive vision was a measure of a group's strength of purpose and a fundamental necessity to make effective demands in negotiation. The danger for Education International trying to manage the common ground between north and south was beginning from the analysis of education reform with the notion that ideology was dead. Such a stance that education change was not an ideologically inspired process fuelled the attitude of elite policy makers, for example at the Washington consensus, labelling anti market ideologies, nationalism, anti-American sentiments and the like as 'modern day obscurantism' (Naim, 1995). A consistent and wide reaching policy reach had to represent the contextualised concerns of all teachers in a way that was political, strategic and relevant to teachers' practice and agential capacity in education.

In order to bridge this divide, the work of French teachers' union, UNSA Education (The Association of Independent Unions) was enlightening. French teachers insisted that "No content should be imposed by international organisations, only public education could be constituted in materials" and based on this proactive teacher response, constructed a progressive program of educational reform. Insisting that "*the content of education needs to remain free, active, political and democratic in order for the worker to produce the wealth for social benefit*", the creation of policy entitled 'Education society' (UNSA-Education, 2001) was a teacher union initiative to deliver an alternative to neo-liberal education reform. *Pour une société educative*, intended to restore social humanism into educational reform and offer a counter to neo-liberal reform, advocated for macro policy being driven by markets and global competition. The policy outline centralised the input of teachers as professionals seeking a coherent approach to social and education change that balanced the concerns of business, government and teachers.

*Il importe de clarifier le contrat liant la société, la nation et son service public d'éducation et d'adopter un méthodologie du changement impliquant réellement tous les acteurs du système éducatif.*<sup>2</sup> (UNSA-Education, 2001)

The policy outlined the societal stance taken by teachers by articulating what education meant in the current context. Education, as a human right, developed citizenship directing how people thought and acted within the society. The role of schools and learning was to deepen people's knowledge base from which they could fully actualise their role as citizens. From these macro statements, the role of the profession was to put into place a curriculum and pedagogy that fostered knowledge diversification. The key partners in the reconstruction of knowledge were teachers and education institutions with parents playing a minor role. The aim was to generate a range of practices based on an informed reconstruction of teachers' practice. Such programs were indicative of a way forward for unions to create a solidarity at the local level by constructing programs that address global concerns embedded in their construction.

## CONCLUSION SO FAR

The larger issue for teachers around the world was articulating a stance on globalisation that was neither globophobic nor market driven. The expansion of the global economy and the alignment of education as a "subject and object" (Marginson, 1999, p.20) of change has put great onus on teachers to confront globalisation as influential social and educational policy impetus. However, within the current contextual conditions, how teachers moved forward to respond to the new conditions was proving problematic, especially since teachers had organised at the global level, as a united class struggling against social injustice and educational control by policy elites. As a global professional class, a coordinated strategy that responded to change and to the macro structures that instigated agendas for social, economic and educational change, raised issues about how teachers reformed relations to achieve their goals in influencing educational reform and unhinging global neo-liberal agendas.

Building consensus among the ranks was a key objective of Education International as a global teachers' union in the current era. Consensus included the unity of global and local strategic interests in order to dismantle the neo-liberal agenda driven from top down development plans from global agencies such as the World Bank and OECD. Teachers from the global south were experiencing the ramifications of dramatic neo-liberal reform that had commercialised education and deteriorated working conditions for teachers. For counterparts in the north, the intensity of

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to clarify the contract binding the company, the nation and its public utility in education and adopt a methodology of the change engaging all the actors of the education system (<http://world.altavista.com/tr>).

global competition in a knowledge economy had shifted the priorities of education towards market-based learning.

The lingering dilemma for teachers in the new context for mass education concerned their ambiguous politics with respect to globalisation and an inconsistent political strategy to pursue greater professional control and autonomy. The political demands from teachers at the Education International congress sought a greater role for teachers as social activists to struggle against the current model for social and education change. Specifically, teachers opposed neo-liberal social reform that polarised society and produced more deprivation and inequality. Teachers expressed a need for unity with other social groups and classes countering neo-liberal reform through the construction of an extended professional role for teachers as social and education agents.

Recent moves by teacher unions were indicative of a way forward for teachers. By constructing alternative education plans and programs that were based on exploiting teachers' capacity to construct curriculum and policy for the global age, teachers were building a more robust conception of what education could be for the new age. Such projects as shown by UNSA were a reminder that teachers' reach was not only confined to the classroom, but that education as a right was an extension of teachers' social capacity to represent the interests of all in education. Policy and programs constructed by UNSA and supported by Education International were indicative of ways to unite the profession, globally and locally.

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